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THE DEATH OF JACQUES D'EGLISE

A paper recently published under the title "Jacques D'Eglise on the Upper Missouri, 1791-1795" is of greater interest because of the picture it gives of the development of French trade in that vast frontier region than because of the discovery by D'Eglise of the Mandan tribe. About the year 1750 there were nine villages of these Indians living near the mouth of the Heart River, but long before D'Eglise first visited them they had been greatly reduced in number by smallpox and by attacks of the Assiniboin and the Dakota. In 1776 the survivors had moved up the Missouri River and were living in only two villages near the mouth of the Knife River in the Arikara country." The report by D'Eglise, after his journey in the fall of 1790, that he had found eight Mandan villages would seem, therefore, to have been an exaggeration intended to impress the Spanish officials in St. Louis and New Orleans.

More intriguing than this reaching out for the trade of a frontier tribe is the fact brought out by Mr. Nasatir that the Spanish authorities in the Mississippi valley, some ten years before the Lewis and Clark Expedition, had their eyes on the Pacific and that Carondelet in 1795 or shortly before had offered a prize of three thousand dollars to the first man who should succeed in reaching the Pacific by way of the Missouri River."

Spanish claims to the regions north and east of New Mexico, based on discovery, exploration, and trade and treaty relations between the Spaniards of New Mexico and the various plains tribes conflicted with similar French claims from the east—until after 1763 when, by the "Family Compact," Louisiana was ceded to Spain. From 1763 to

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1. By Abraham P. Nasatir in *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, xiv, 47-56.
 2. Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians*, "Mandans."
 3. See documents given by Nasatir, *Miss. Val. Hist. Rev.*, xiv, 57-71.

1801, when Louisiana was retroceded by Spain to France, the whole country from the Mississippi River to the Pacific was Spanish and (except with England on the north) there was no boundary question other than those between Louisiana, Texas, New Mexico and California as Spanish Provinces. Of course with the sale of Louisiana by France to the United States in 1803 national boundaries in this region immediately became vital again.

The activities of the Frenchman Jacques D'Eglise as presented by Mr. Nasatir fall almost wholly within the Spanish period, 1763-1801. Beyond 1795, the author says, "Nothing further has come to light concerning Jacques D'Eglise, and we do not know whether the journey [to the Pacific] was ever made by him. It is known, however, that he subsequently engaged in trade on the Upper Missouri, and in company with Lorenzo Deroche ascended the Missouri, probably in 1804, with the idea of finding the shortest route to New Mexico. Casa Calvo, who gives us this information, also states: 'The latter [D'Eglise] was employed by the company of the Exploration of the Misury, and since he has not returned this year it is inferred that he has penetrated into Nuevo Mexico.'

"We know as little of D'Eglise's later life as of his early career. 'Without documents there is no history.' Hence our story of the 'Discovery of the Mandan' must pause here until further search of the Spanish and other archives shall shed more light upon the subject."

The Spanish archives in Santa Fe show that the inference of Casa Calvo was correct.

"Lorenzo Durocher" was in Santa Fe early in 1805, as appears from the blotter of a communication dated May 22 of that year from Governor Alencaster to the commandant general in Chihuahua.⁴ Durocher, or Deroche, desired to return to his own country and Alencaster asked for explicit authority to incur the expenses of sending him to Chihuahua, of his subsistence in that city and of send-

4. *Spanish Archives of New Mexico*, no. 1834(2). Document no. 1, *infra*

ing him home from there with an adequate escort and horses. A notation on the blotter indicates that there had been earlier correspondence on the same subject. The reply of Salcedo, dated June 5, is not in the archives, but Durocher was enabled to present himself to Salcedo in Chihuahua about two months later, in company with Juan Bautista Lalande,⁵ another Frenchman from "Ylinois." Apparently their first request through Alencaster was that they be allowed to return home by way of Texas, but when they presented themselves before Salcedo in Chihuahua they were asking (possibly as a matter of policy) that they be allowed "to continue subjects of the Spanish government" with residence in New Mexico.⁷ When Salcedo sent them back to Santa Fe in September he expressed approval of their request and covered their expenses in a consignment of effects which were to be used in binding the friendship of "the Indian Nations inhabiting the banks of the Missouri River from its confluence with the Chato westwards."⁸

In October, following their return, Durocher and Lalande accompanied the "Indian interpreters" Pedro Vial and Josef Jarvet,⁹ upon a journey which the latter undertook to visit the Pawnees. Vial and Jarvet, and a carbineer who was in the party, reported to Governor Alencaster that Durocher and Lalande, especially the former, had repeatedly made invidious comparisons between the Spanish and American governments in the matter of monthly pay

5. Jean Baptiste Lalande, or Juan Bautista Lalande as the Spaniards called him, was a creole trader who was sent out in 1805 by William Morrison of Kaskaskia, under instructions to carry his goods to Santa Fe and attempt to establish commercial relations. Lalande has been pilloried in history by Pike and Bancroft as an absconder (*Bancroft's Works*, xvii, 291-5), whereas the truth seems to be that the Spanish authorities knew he wanted to return to his own country but they prevented his doing so. See document no. 4, *infra*.

6. Upper Louisiana, later Missouri, at this time was still known as "Spanish Illinois;" and St. Louis was "San Luis de lo Illinueces."

7. *Sp. Archs of N. M.*, no. 1888. Document no. 2, *infra*.

8. *Ibid.*, no. 1889. Document no. 3, *infra*.

9. Vial and Jarvet were both Frenchmen, not naturalized though in Spanish employ at Santa Fe. Both appear frequently in the archives, the latter often misspelled as *Chalvet*, *Chalvert*, and even *Calvert*. Vial did important work in exploring routes to San Antonio, Bejar, Natchitoches, and St. Louis.

and expense allowance to interpreters. Writing to Salcedo on January 4, 1806, Alencaster again reported that the two Frenchmen, as well as "two other Frenchmen" and an American who had entered New Mexico some time before with two Cuampes chiefs," desired an opportunity to return to their own country but that he would not allow it, in view of the above conduct and the possible injury which might result from the knowledge which they had acquired of the Province, without an express order to this effect from Salcedo."

Whether Durocher separated from Jacques D'Eglise on the upper Missouri late in 1804 or they entered New Mexico together and then separated, is not clear from the archives now extant in Santa Fe. Durocher apparently was acting independently in the "memorial" submitted to Alencaster early in 1805; on the journey to Chihuahua he was thrown with Lalande and they two stayed together at least until late in that year. At no time in the present records does D'Eglise appear until late in 1806."

On November 20, 1806, Alencaster forwarded to the royal audiencia in Guadalajara "the criminal suit drawn up against Antonio Carabajal and Mariano Venavides by the *alcalde ordinario* of the Villa de la Cañada in this Province of New Mexico for having assassinated as they had conspired (to do) the Frenchman Santiago Iglis." The crime would be found so fully proven in the papers sent and it had been so horrible that it would be most useful in the Province that the punishment be prompt and exemplary, as this would necessarily make a profound impression on the minds of the other inhabitants who were unaccustomed

10. The Cuampes were a division of the Faraon Apaches; their range probably was between the Rio Grande and the Pecos River, southeast of Santa Fe.

11. *Sp. Archs. of N. M.*, no. 1942 (1). Document no. 4, *infra*. On August 16, 1806, Durocher had a passport from Santa Fe to Chihuahua; and on August 31 he was at El Paso with "the Anglo-American carpenter, Dimas Proseel" (James Pursley), both *en route* to that city. These are the last references to Durocher.

12. He was not either of "the two other Frenchmen" mentioned in document no. 4. These are nowhere named, but they are identified with references in archives subsequent to the death of D'Eglise.

to seeing capital punishment inflicted. The suit was not being forwarded to Durango or elsewhere since experience had shown that it would never be returned with the judgment asked for.¹³

The wording of Alencaster's communication would suggest that the murder of D'Eglise had occurred only shortly before, but the exact date and the details of the crime are not shown. And despite the urgency of Alencaster's representations, nearly three years passed before punishment was meted out to the criminals. On July 23, 1809, Governor Alencaster advised the Rev. Father Fray José Benito Pereyro that the *alcalde mayor* of Cañada¹⁴ had been directed to execute the sentence of death passed by "the Most Powerful Supreme Tribunal of the Royal Audiencia of Guadalajara" upon the criminals Antonio Carabajal and Mariano Venavides for the perfidious murder perpetrated on the person of the "Frenchman transient in this Province, Santiago Iglis;" and as it was necessary to inform the said criminals of the said sentence on the 27th so that from that day they might "begin to prepare themselves to suffer death in a Christian manner with the most pious and proper object of directing their souls to Heaven, as the Laws and our Holy and Catholic Religion provide," he requested the custodio to have whatever number of the Religious he thought fitting, come to Santa Fe to aid and assist the chaplain Fray Francisco de Hocio in so important a matter until its conclusion, in which act he, the custodio, would be accrediting his characteristic religiousness and the zeal so appropriate to his office.¹⁵

The *alcalde* performed the task assigned to him, going to the jail in which the criminals were confined and, in the presence of two witnesses, informing them of the sentence of the tribunal. They expressed their submission and in token thereof each laid the official paper upon his

13. *Sp. Archs. of N. M.*, no. 2029 (3). Document no. 5, *infra*.

14. La Villa Nueva de la Cañada de Santa Cruz; known today as Santa Cruz, 24 miles north of Santa Fe.

15. *Sp. Archs. of N. M.*, no. 2238.

head. They were then turned over to the spiritual ministrations of four Religious.¹⁶

How much time was allowed them to prepare their souls for death is not clear, but on August 4th the alcalde, with the same two witnesses, signed his formal report that at 7:45 o'clock of the day designated he had had them shot and their bodies hanged on the royal road, as required and for the length of time he deemed fitting to make them an example, after which they were delivered for ecclesiastical burial.¹⁷ Alencaster reported the execution to Salcedo, and the latter made brief acknowledgement on September 23, 1809.¹⁸

Very possibly the archives at Chihuahua and Guadalajara would supply answers regarding many details in the last two years of the life of Jacques D'Eglise, but the evidence is conclusive that he did enter New Mexico and that he suffered a violent death within a few miles of Santa Fe. At least a dozen other French adventurers entered New Mexico during these five years¹⁹ and to the Spanish authorities D'Eglise was only a transient French fur-trader, also his earlier record suggests that he may not have been entirely innocent of provocation to the crime; but if so, the punishment of his murderers was all the more creditable to Spanish law and order in New Mexico.

LANSING B. BLOOM

NO. 1: ALENCASTER TO SALCEDO, MAY 22, 1805.

Reply to no. 7 [Alencaster's notation]

I send you the accompanying Memorial of Lorenzo Durocher who, as I have made him understand, must ask you ultimately

16. *Ibid.*, no 2242. Document no. 6, *infra*.

17. *Ibid.* Document no. 7, *infra*.

18. *Ibid.*, no. 2254 (2). Document no. 8, *infra*.

19. From 1805 to 1809, besides Durocher and Lalande, these included Juan Bautista la Casa, Dionicio Lacroix and Andres Ferieu from Louisiana; Andres Sulier and Enrique Visonot from St. Louis; Santiago Claimorgan "and three others;" and the "two other Frenchmen" from Louisiana.

(*categoricamente*) for the money which he needs in order to go to Chihuahua, to subsist in that city and to proceed to his own Country with adequate escort, I have not been able to procure (it) I explained to him, (after) assuring him that for his journey to present himself before Your Honor he would be furnished Escort and Horses. I see myself under the necessity of directing to you the accompanying Memorial that you may determine what may suit your pleasure.

God (etc.) Santa Fee 22 May 1805

(to) the Commandant General
of the Internal Provinces.

(forwarding memorial of French-
man Lorenzo Durocher)

(answered June 5 with
secret order)

NO. 2: SALCEDO TO ALENCASTER, SEPTEMBER 9, 1805.

Bearing your paper no. 54 of August 9th ult., appeared in this city the citizens of Ylinois Juan Bautista Lalanda, and Lorenzo Durocher whom you sent hither in compliance with my orders so to do; and having listened to them regarding the reasons which brought them to that Province and the intentions which they have of establishing themselves there, I have instructed them to return and arrange with you in this matter, since, in conformity with the Royal decisions, I have authorized you to hear, consider, and decide all cases of like nature which may occur of inhabitants of said places in Ylinois who, without violating the constitution, may ask to continue subjects of the Spanish Government within the limits of that Province.

With this understanding they are both returning thither, and without questioning that the opinion may be well founded which you have formed regarding their honor and the truth of their statements and purposes I charge you to have them under observation, (and they have been) advised that for their journey I have ordered that the necessary aid be supplied them.

God guard you many years. Chihuahua, 9 September 1805.

Nemesio Salcedo

(rubic)

(to) the Governor of N. Mexico.

NO. 3: SALCEDO TO ALENCASTER, SEPTEMBER 12, 1805.

One of the directions which I have given you in the order of

the 9th of the current (month) in order to win and strengthen the friendship of the Indian Nations which inhabit the banks of the Misuri River from its confluence with the Chato westwards is that of trying to court the persons of those (nations) who may visit that Capital and even, if it may seem to you opportune, of sending to the Chiefs at their own places of abode a moderate gift; with which in mind and being aware that the amount which that Government may have of articles intended for gifts to the other bands may not suffice to cover this attention, I have resolved that the Sergeant of Militia Nicolas Ortiz shall transport and deliver to you the Effects which appear on the enclosed list (*Faciura*), to the total value of 460 pesos seven reales including the 50 pesos furnished the travelers Lorenzo Durocher and Juan Baptista Lalanda, it has been supplied by the treasury of this city, upon order from me to this end: all of which will serve for your gance.

God guard you many years. Chihuahua 12 September 1805.

Nemesio Salcedo
(rubric)

(to) the Governor of Nuevo Mexico.

No. 4: ALENCASTER TO SALCEDO, JANUARY 4, 1806.

Notwithstanding the good reports which I have given you regarding the good conduct of the Frenchmen Durocher and Lalanda, it seems to me proper to inform you of what has been reported to me by the Carbineer Juan Lucero, Don Pedro Vial and Josef Jarbet to have occurred on the journey to the Pawnees which they undertook in October.

Lucero says that he noticed repeated conversations between said Frenchmen and Don Pedro Vial, and understanding something (of their talk) he questioned Don Pedro repeatedly who explained to him that said Frenchmen were arguing that never could this Province make gratuities to the (Indian) Nations as (could) the Americans who had a greater supply of gifts, better, and that (the Indians) would always like the friendship of those (Americans) and would prefer them to us; and that Don Pedro maintained the opposite. That to Jarbet the said Frenchmen would say that the pay of ten pesos which they were giving him was very small; that the Americans were paying Interpreters 25 pesos a month, and that when they were traveling with the Nations or were coming with some Captains (chiefs) they were supplied with one peso a day, but that Jarbet always said that he preferred to be here with small pay to serve in Spain and that he was hoping they would reward

his merit by increasing his pay, but that always the Frenchmen were insisting on this kind of arguments especially Durocher, and as this did not look good to him he believed it proper to inform me of it.

In similar terms Vial and Jarbet explained themselves, telling me about said disputes and conversations stating to me that it had not looked well to them that, after having been well received and well treated in this Province, the said Durocher and Lalande should so express themselves.

These persons are desirous of a chance to return to their Country, and although Your Honor has approved it, it seems to me proper to call your attention to this point so that you may decide whether both they as well as the other two Frenchmen and the American who came in with the Cuampes shall be permitted to do so, since it occurs to me that some injury might be occasioned by them and the knowledge which they have acquired of this Province, and consequently even though an opportunity (for their return) present itself, I shall not allow them to depart without an express order from Your Honor.

God (etc.) Santa Fee 4 January 1806—J. R. A.—(to) Com.
Gen'l of the Int. Provs.

(notation: treats of the departure of the French citizens
of Louisiana from this Province.)

NO. 5: ALENCASTER TO THE AUDIENCIA OF GUADALAJARA,
NOVEMBER 20, 1806.

I am sending to Your Audiencia the Criminal Suit prepared against Antonio Carabajal and Mariano Venavides by the *Alcalde ordinario* of the Villa de la Cañada in this Province of New Mexico for having assassinated as they had conspired (to do) the Frenchman Santiago Iglis, so that Your Audiencia may order the corresponding sentence of capital punishment to be affixed by the Counsellor whom you may select, or that Your Audiencia may decide what seems proper.

In it (the suit) the crime is found so fully proven and it is so horrible that it will be most useful in this Province that the punishment be prompt and exemplary, as this will necessarily impress the minds of the other inhabitants who are unaccustomed to seeing the infliction of capital punishment.

This Suit is not being directed to Durango or other point since abundant antecedents have shown that it would never be returned with the judgment asked for.

God guard Your Audiencia many years. Santa Fee, 20 November 1806.—J. R. A. —Señores of the Royal Audiencia of Guadalajara.

NO. 6: MANUEL GARCIA DE LA MORA, RETURN OF WRIT,
(JULY 27, 1809?)

I, Don Manuel Garcia de la Mora, *alcalde mayor* of the Villa of Santa Cruz de la Cañada, went to the jail where the two said criminals are confined, Antonio Caravajal and Mariano Benavides, and they being present and with the attendance of two witnesses, I notified them and gave them to know the Sentence pronounced in the royal Writ which precedes, and they, being informed of it, said they would, and did, submit, each placing the (Writ) upon his head; and for evidence I have put it in a "return of writ" (*diligencia*.) and I delivered them to the Examination of four Religious, and I sign it with the said witnesses on said day month and year, of which I give faith.

Manuel Garcia
(rubric)

Antonio Tugillo (Trujillo?)
witness
José de la Peña
witness

NO. 7: MANUEL GARCIA DE LA MORA, SAME ARCHIVE,
AUGUST 4, 1809.

Villa of Santa Fee, 4 August 1809.

I the said *Alcalde mayor* Don Manuel Garcia de la Mora, in fulfillment of what I am ordered in the Royal Writ committed to me by the Supreme tribunal of the Royal Audiencia of Guadalajara, had the said criminals Antonio Carabajal and Mariano Benavides shot (*hizo alcubuscar*), at seven and three-quarters of the day named, and I had their bodies hanged on the highway (*en el camino real*) as required of me, for the length of time which seemed to me fitting to make of them an Example, and afterwards I delivered them to Mercy, that they might be given ecclesiastical burial; and in evidence I have signed it with the two witnesses attending in the capacity conferred upon me of which I give faith.

Manuel Garcia
(rubric)

Antonio Tugillo
witness
José de la Peña
witness

NO. 8: SALCEDO TO ALENCASTER, SEPTEMBER 23, 1809.

ESTÁ bien lo praticado por V. M. en cumplimiento de Sentencia pronunciada por el Tribunal de Guadalajara á los Reos, Carabajal y Benavides, de que me da conocimiento con el numero 170.

DIOS guarde á V. M. muchos años. Chihuahua 23 de Setiembre 1809.

Nemesio Salcedo
(rubricado)

Sr. Gov'or Ynt'o del Nuevo Mexico.